



**STRATEGY
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**TOTAL ARMY FORCE MIX:
RESHAPING AMERICA'S ARMY**

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Turbulence in today's Army has had a profound and debilitating effect on unit and soldier readiness. Drastic reductions in manpower and funds over the past five years, combined with oppressive increases in deployments, have resulted in an exhausted if not unready force. While the Army has become more creative in mixing active and reserve forces to accomplish its many missions, it has discarded the "roundout" concept at the very time it needs some form of augmentation to fill the Army to the level envisioned by its leadership and dictated by the demands of the National Military Strategy. This paper proposes a return to the roundout concept. But it recommends that, instead of trying to force the brigade roundout to work, the Army roundout at a logical, trainable echelon—the platoon. This proposal salvages the Army's concept of preparing for two MRCs, identifies some spaces for creation of additional units that are historically the busiest in the Army, and provides some budgetary savings which should be focused on the Army's future. It also will reduce the suspicion and distrust now existing between the AC and RC. But most importantly, this proposal recognizes that as the Army gets smaller, it must rely on the entire force—active, guard, and reserves. The best way to ensure the force is totally prepared is to integrate components in such a way that integrated training becomes the norm.

The Strategic Environment in Today's Army

We must not go back to the days of the "hollow Army." We cannot repeat the mistakes made twice in this century, when armistice was followed by recklessness and defense was purged as if the world were permanently safe.¹

**President Bush
January 28, 1992**

Turbulence in the Army of the 1990s has had a profound and debilitating effect on unit and soldier readiness. Drastic reductions in manpower and funds over the past five years, combined with oppressive increases in deployments, have resulted in an exhausted if not unready force. Previous back-slapping over U.S. victories during the Cold War and in the gulf has now cooled as the Army faces the cold reality that there is more to do and less to do it with. To meet all of its requirements for the hodgepodge of peacetime operations in this "New World," and because so much of its structure is in the reserves, the Army has had to become more creative as it mixes and matches active and reserve forces to accomplish its many missions.²

In fact, today the busiest units in the Army are not the divisional combat units but the combat support and service support units throughout the Army. But because current national strategy dictates the need to respond to two almost simultaneous major regional contingencies, the Army is standing firm on its commitment to maintain 10 full-strength divisions.³ And because of the Army's experiences during the last war, these 10 divisions are now manned by Active Component (AC) soldiers. Numerous actions have been taken to placate the Reserve Components (RC)--primarily the Army National Guard--by developing new programs in lieu of the old roundout concept such as enhanced brigades and the roundup concept. But the "roundout" concept has been discarded.

Perhaps the biggest effect is now showing itself not so much in readiness but in the recapitalization of the force. While AC structure and the budget have been reduced by about 35%, the modernization accounts have decreased 65% primarily to protect training funds. And although short-term readiness has been protected, without a \$3 billion-a-year increase in modernization immediately, the Army's tracked and wheeled vehicle fleets may well be obsolete by the turn of the century.⁴ Now, as a bill payer due to further cuts and under-budgeted

programs, the Army has cut the \$1 billion Armored Gun System program, once touted as the premier light infantry weapon system and replacement for the antique Sheridan tank.⁵ Admittedly, Force XXI is a step towards ensuring the Army's technological edge in the next war, and a wealth of possibilities are being uncovered in the research and experimentation underway. But even with a smaller force, given the absence of a large threat and the budgetary trends associated with that, the Army will not be able to afford to outfit the entire force, AC and RC, in new information-age equipment. Incompatible equipment within the various Army components (not to mention other Services and Allies) will further impact readiness and interoperability.

After years of draw down towards a defined target force, we now find that even the 495K AC end-strength is in jeopardy. In fact, it is not even certain what will happen to Army end-strength after the next Presidential election, regardless of who wins. Even though President Clinton says he supports a strong defense, he has not indicated whether he supports an increase in defense spending. Assistant Defense Secretary Deborah Lee has predicted that spending will get even tighter in the future. And the Heritage Foundation estimates that defense spending will be the equivalent of \$230 billion in current year dollars by 2002--an additional 10% cut--and the Army will have to inactivate two more divisions (down to 8) to survive.⁶

So far the Army Chief of Staff has been able to persuade Congress to let him decide where to cut the budget rather than having them dictate end-strength ceilings. The Chief of Staff's stand in the face of continuing calls for cuts is laudable and he has made some gains as a result of his "efficiency campaign." But the large scale savings needed to pay for the recapitalization of the force are not in sight. Admittedly efficiencies can be found and this initiative should continue, but the current practice of incentivizing the program by returning savings to the local installation who corrected the inefficiency does not let the Chief of Staff fund his major unfinanced requirement--modernization.

Costs of continuing to protect AC combat structure are prohibitive in an environment where Congress and the Army are looking for cost savings and cuts. Units are being deployed too frequently; soldiers are becoming harder to retain as they become fed up with back-to-back deployments; aging equipment is deteriorating beyond repair with no hope of replacement in sight;

and the resentment, distrust, and suspicion harbored by the Reserve Component for the Active Army continues to grow untreated. The Army has discarded the "roundout" concept in active divisions at the very time it needs some form of augmentation to fill the Army to the level envisioned by its leadership and dictated by the demands of the National Military Strategy. Recent Total Army Analysis has revealed what the Army leadership already suspected: that the personnel end-strength required to support a 10-division force is approximately 518,000--or 23,000 soldiers more than the 495,000 currently authorized. As we continue to protect the active combat arms at all costs, we need to ask this fundamental question: "Who pays?"

Clearly the Army must remain trained and ready for future unknowns. It must be organized to respond rapidly to a variety of contingencies--both in peace and war. But force designs have discarded the roundout concept and focused on immediately responsive AC forces because of a misconception that active divisions must deploy before a reserve unit could possibly train to the standards required. If the Army is to be relevant and capable in the future, it must increasingly rely further on the Reserve Components. It is now time, for the very cogent reasons previewed here, to break the structural paradigm that exists between the Army's active and reserve components. Some risks will have to be accepted in a smaller Army. In the near term though, according to senior Army leaders, there are no peer competitors to rival the U.S. military. There are alternatives that both prepare the Total Army and do not wear down the Active Component. Now may well be the best, and possibly only, opportunity to experiment with different structural alternatives.

Keeping the Total Army in Perspective

Is there a reasonable and innovative way to “roundout” the Active Component with Reserve Component units that provides some cost savings and efficiency to the Total Army, enhances Total Army readiness, improves compatibility, engenders trust between the components, and improves integration? In the past, many different concepts have been tried but for various reasons they have been discarded. Without regard to the benefits that could be accrued in today’s environment, it may be useful first to review how the “roundout” concept has in the Army.

The Origins of “Roundout”

Roundout was based on the early recognition that large standing armies were not affordable but national security is essential. Reserve augmentation of the Active Component has been a fact of life in the 20th century, albeit with many problems and much controversy. While many may think the roundout concept was developed in the 1970s, it actually originated in 1908 as a result of a War Department directive to integrate the Regular Army and the National Guard in geographic areas. The intent at that time was to round out National Guard divisions with AC brigades.⁷ But after two years the Army abandoned the concept and each component went in separate ways with AC divisions organizing into expeditionary forces while the National Guard divisions trained for deployment. Without centralized direction, Guard divisions began to rely on external means to organize, train, and equip themselves while the Regular Army devised different ways to expand. This divergence was corrected in 1916 when Congress directed the Army to organize and equip National Guard divisions in accordance with Regular Army divisional tables of organization and equipment (TOE) and gave the President the authority to prescribe the kinds of units to be maintained by the states.⁸

World War II saw a resurgence of the integrated division concept, but this time with National Guard regiments augmenting Active divisions. As part of the country’s total mobilization, Guard regiments were activated starting in September 1940, integrated into Regular divisions, and given the training time necessary to become combat ready. As a result, the Regular Army grew to trust the capabilities of the Guard units as they witnessed their readiness improve. Admittedly there were problems and complaints by both Active and Reserve soldiers as reservists

were involuntarily extended, units were cross-attached, or Active officers were placed in command of Reserve units.⁹ Still, as training progressed and active and reserve lines blurred, unit cohesion and combat readiness improved. However, the post-war priority was to get the boys home and draw down the Armed Forces as fast as possible. As with most rapid drawdowns, the result was a loss of combat readiness.

Korea represented the first post-World War II opportunity to employ the Reserve Components in a national emergency. However, while over 96,000 reservists were mobilized, not one RC unit deployed to Korea. If AC readiness had deteriorated during the inter-war years, RC readiness had dissolved completely.¹⁰ After Korea, the Armed Forces underwent a massive restructuring under President Eisenhower, with significant change in the composition, size, and structure of the Army Reserve.

During the Vietnam War, sensing a need to arouse public support for what was foreseen by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a probable large scale war, General Earle Wheeler tried to convince the President to activate the reserves. The Joint Chiefs not only saw a need to call-up the reserves for the sake of public support but they knew that over time the Active Component would become totally embroiled in Vietnam and the country would need a trained and ready strategic reserve--something the Reserve Components were organized for with adequate train-up time. President Johnson decided against a reserve call-up sensing the political repercussions it might have--particularly the Congressional approval process inherent in any activation procedure. He believed that this "conflict" should be kept low key and that the regulars could handle it without augmentation. President Johnson never understood the political repercussions of not involving the reserves, and by extension the public.¹¹ His lack of vision was to have a severe impact on the U.S. defense establishment for decades to come.

In August 1970, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird introduced his vision for the Armed Forces of the future--the Total Force Concept. He believed that, because of what he saw as an hysteria to bring the soldiers home from Vietnam and the current public disdain of its defense establishment, defense budgets would be reduced drastically. And because of this, capabilities would have to be integrated from the various components of the Armed Forces. Based on this concept, the Services were directed to equip and maintain combat ready units in the Reserve

Components. These units were to be manned, equipped, and prepared to augment AC units during less severe emergencies as well as during total mobilization. And the overall mix of forces between the AC and RC was to be accomplished in a way that best supported the national strategy and met the threat.¹²

General Abrams' Intent

Creighton Abrams returned from Vietnam as a man on a mission. He was embittered by the political ineptitude and indecision that in his opinion had destroyed the Armed Forces of the United States where no enemy had ever been able to before.¹³ He believed that one of the single biggest mistakes committed by successive Presidential administrations starting with President Kennedy was their failure to activate the reserves. He knew that the primary reason the reserves were not called up was because of the political impact such a move would have had. But, he did not believe that the political impacts were worth the lives of the 55,000 soldiers who died in the jungles of Southeast Asia. In fact he believed that political and public support were absolutely essential to assure the commitment of the soldier to fight for his country.

As he was confirmed as the Army Chief of Staff in 1972, he rapidly endorsed the Total Force Concept and resolved to organize the Army in a way that would never again allow it to be employed against the will of the people in the way it had been in Vietnam. General Abrams believed that the total force was a reflection of the public will and that its use should be a demonstration of that will. In his words, "the credibility of this nation's strength depends heavily on the Army as a whole."¹⁴ For this reason in the few days he had left before his untimely death in 1974, he worked with General William Depuy, the Training and Doctrine Commander, to develop a means to "so thoroughly integrate the National Guard and reserve forces into the Total Force to ensure their being mobilized for any future major conflict."¹⁵

General Abrams also believed that the Active Component had to ensure that the reserves were ready when needed. "We must not be taken in by the misguided idea that our reserves can be made ready with indifferent support, or that they can get by with half-hearted attention."¹⁶ While it is clear that General Abrams envisioned total integration of Reserve Components into the Active Component, General Depuy's solution was to again go to the brigade roundout concept. As an experiment the Army in 1975 implemented the concept in four of 16 divisions.¹⁷ The

concept of integration proved successful for a number of reasons. It gave National Guard units a sense of direction. Whereas before they were not sure what their warfighting responsibilities were or to what theater they would be deployed, they now knew that if the United States went to war, they would go too. They had their training reviewed and approved by an AC division commander and they were annually evaluated by the division to which they were assigned. The roundout brigade felt like a part of the division. That was the intent. And by all accounts it appeared to be successful. In a now famous quote by then Major General Norman Schwarzkopf, the Commanding General of the 24th Infantry Division from 1983 to 1985, he praised his roundout brigade:

Roundout is a fact of life...the 48th Brigade, Georgia Army National Guard, is the third brigade of my division...I expect them to fight alongside us. They have demonstrated (their capability) through three demanding rotations at the National Training Center...they are, in fact, combat ready...¹⁸

Lessons from Desert Storm

By all indications, the roundout concept was alive, well, and ready to implement in 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait. After 15 years of testing, and glowing endorsements by division commanders, it was understood that roundout was the way the Army would fight. Admittedly, the roundout brigade might take a little longer to mobilize because of home station processing and training requirements--by some estimates as much a 4-5 weeks. This however was considered incidental to deployment.¹⁹ But when the 24th Infantry Division and the 1st Cavalry Division deployed to Saudi Arabia, their respective roundout brigades were not mobilized.

Many reserve units were mobilized. In fact the Army could not have prosecuted the war, or for that matter even have gotten to the war, had it not been for the reserves. The main goal of Army leadership in gaining approval to mobilize the reserves, in an effort to overcome the ghosts of Vietnam, was to ensure that the public supported its soldiers. The mobilization of the reserves represented a symbol of national resolve.²⁰ In the Army's case though, only combat support and service support units were mobilized, at least initially. And as positive as mobilization of the reserves was, when the Army did not deploy the roundout brigades as planned, this was seen as a violation of a special trust by National Guardsmen, local citizens, and many in Congress.

Many reasons have been suggested for why the roundout brigades were not deployed. One was that the Secretary of Defense balked when the Army presented him with the large number of reserve personnel required for the operation. Even though it had been anticipated that this was going to be a major war, Secretary Cheney was either not familiar with the mechanics of the Total Force or the way the Army was organized for combat.²¹ But in a letter to the House Armed Services Committee, Secretary Cheney stated there were two specific reasons why the roundout brigades were not activated: first, he had not been advised by Army senior leaders that they were necessary in August 1990 and, second, he did not believe that the war would be complete within the statutory time limits on the use of the Selected Reserve.²² Other reasons have been posited: The units were not ready to deploy; the roundout brigades needed more training before they could be deployed; the Active Component did not trust the National Guard units; and the National Guard personnel could not be depended on. The bellicose attitude of many Guardsmen after the war would support these latter reasons. Many senior officers complained bitterly that the 48th Infantry Brigade was being held to unreasonable standards in a ploy by the Active Component to ensure that it could not deploy.²³ Now, hindsight being what it is, had the 48th Infantry brigade deployed in August with the 24th Infantry Division, it would have had six months to prepare in the environment in which it was to fight before the war began. The Army also could have activated the brigades in August, begun their training, and deployed them in November when the operation changed to offensive preparations. But they were not, possibly because of the Army's legitimate concern for these soldiers' safety. So while there was a significant contribution by the Reserve Component in Desert Storm, the Army still deployed into a combat situation without reserve maneuver forces.²⁴ The attitude of mistrust and hurt feelings that resulted from that decision has caused a significant increase in suspicion between the components.

The reason for not deploying these combat forces is relatively easy to understand. Regardless of whether there is agreement on this, RC combat units were not deployed because they could not possibly have been ready to immediately fight once in theater (which was the assumption going in). In 39 training days per year, regardless of their patriotism and fighting spirit, reservists will never be proficient in individual, crew, squad, platoon, company, battalion, and brigade operations as well as combined arms and battle staff operations.²⁵ It is a simple

impossibility and it has been a recurring fallacy in the Army's paradigm of organizing the Total Force for combat.

Fortunately for the Army, in 1990 there were sufficient active combat forces available to substitute for those designated roundout brigades. The 197th Infantry Brigade from Fort Benning rounded out the 24th Infantry Division and the 1st Brigade, 2nd Armored Division, in the process of inactivating, rounded out the 1st Cavalry Division. This same luxury does not exist today though. While the Army has ten active divisions, each with three active combat brigades, these units are significantly busier than they were in 1990 and they are also less ready for combat. As was pointed out earlier, there are not enough soldiers authorized in the Army to adequately field ten divisions. And as far as the reserve combat forces are concerned, while much has been done to get them ready for combat, the fact remains despite glowing training status reports that these units will not be ready to fight if they are needed. Add to that the doubts of Guardsmen manning those units who saw their first opportunity to fight in 1990 withheld from them and what results is an entire category of units in the Army who see no real reason to train since they are fairly certain they will not be deployed if the need arises. This is the dilemma that must be resolved, even more than the budgetary concerns or the fact that the active Army cannot do everything, or that modernization is being sacrificed to keep the force robust in the Active Component. **The Army has an imperative to restore the trust that no longer exists between the components.**

Structuring for Tomorrow: A Different View of the Roundout Program

Clearly, the Army needs a new vision for organizing its units which capitalizes on the capabilities and limitations of both the Reserve and Active Components. Two recent initiatives have moved towards this somewhat. A Vice Chief of Staff special study group, after reviewing Army structure issues, determined that certain functions could be transferred to the Reserves—among them certain field artillery and air defense artillery units. And then in an attempt to overcome the certain 20,000 cut in personnel which looms over the Army, the Chief of Staff and TRADOC recently approved a measure to make combat units smaller, by about a third. But these “salami slice” approaches are not integration. It does not yet appear that the Army is ready to make radical change to guarantee a trained and ready Total Army in the future. General Abrams’ vision of integrating was designed to avoid a situation where the President could use the military without public support while simultaneously ensuring the Total Army was trained and ready.²⁶ But with declining budgets, as long as the Army continues to “integrate” at the major unit level the overall result will be the long-term reduction in readiness of the world’s strongest Army.

Several different agencies in the Army, among them Training and Doctrine Command and Concepts Analysis Agency, are involved in the analysis or study of force structure. The major lesson from Desert Storm seems to have taught them, incomprehensibly, that the Army if called to fight would do so using only AC combat units. But one just has first to look at the size of the Active Component today, and the size it will soon be, to see that there is no way the Army can fight the next war with just AC combat units. Perhaps the main reason analysts come to this erroneous conclusion is because of the echelon in which they focus—the brigade. All major force structure integration actions developed by the Army have centered around the “major unit” level, primarily the brigade. But clearly, with evidence from the Combined Arms Center and guardsmen, that RC major units cannot possibly train beyond the platoon level in 39 days a year, the logical solution would be to integrate the Army at the platoon level to achieve enhanced availability of reserve units and improved readiness of the Total Army.²⁷ There may be ways to “roundout” at higher level than platoon for those types of units that have very narrowly focused Mission Essential Task Lists or that have little utility in the Active structure during peacetime.

But what must now be done in light of the major reductions the Army has experienced, is to look for radical, innovative ways to restructure.

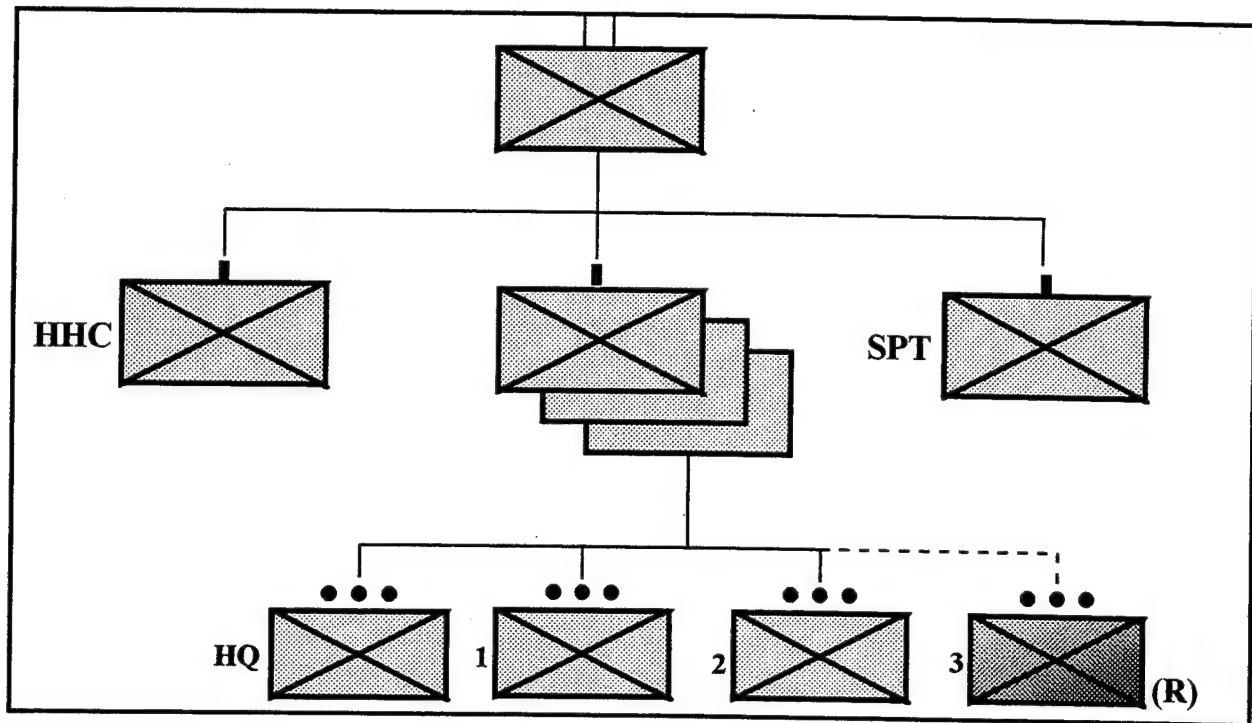
The Platoon as the Basic Building Block

As the Army gets smaller, it must realize that the units that are used predominantly in peacetime are not necessarily from the combat arms. Yet the trend continues to be to cut combat support and service support structure, or move it to the reserve component where it is not as readily available as a major unit, to protect combat arms structure. This practice puts more non-conflict related work on the few remaining active units available to accomplish it.²⁸

Certainly there is a large difference of opinion between the Active and Reserve leadership on precisely what missions should and could be accomplished by each component. But the fundamental fact remains that active forces cannot continue to work at the pace they are without an effect on overall readiness. And reserves are only available for a limited amount of time each year. The key then must be to structure the force in such a way that takes advantage of these considerations and limitations.

Platoons are the basic building block of this proposal to radically restructure the Army. Recognition that the RC could not possibly be trained at major unit level led the Army to develop the "Bold Shift" initiative which focused training at platoon-level with the balance of the units' proficiency to be obtained after mobilization. "Bold Shift" recognizes the fact that reserves can best be trained and employed at platoon level. But the Army has not yet taken the logical next step. The major components of this proposal are:

- Convert one platoon to the Reserve Component in every combat arms company in each of the Army's ten AC divisions.
- Assign RC soldiers to selected support positions in each combat arms company to assist in maintenance, supply, and administration as necessary at a ratio of one for every two AC soldiers.
- Replace one-third of the AC soldiers in the Support Company with RC soldiers.
- Finally, identify positions on the battalion staff for full-time staffing by RC soldiers.



Typical Battalion with Roundout Platoons at Company Level

- Assign the RC platoon's personnel and equipment to the AC Company Commander.
- Review slice units to determine at what level they should be rounded out and cut them appropriately in AC structure.
- Through a "hub-and-spoke" arrangement over time, position these RC units in close proximity of the division to which they are assigned.
- Train RC platoons on individual and platoon skills during the 39 days it has available each year under the direct supervision of the AC company and battalion commanders.

Reasons to Roundout

There are significant advantages for rounding out active companies with reserve platoons. The threat permits it; the mission demands it; RC platoons are trainable in the context of the time available; there are budgetary savings to be gleaned from this that could materially improve Army modernization accounts; but perhaps the most significant reason is in the philosophy of the Total Army and the benefits of fully integrating those components: cohesion, trust, and readiness.

Mission, Purpose, and Threat.

The mission of today's Army is to deter aggression, or if that fails, to fight and win. Additionally, the Army conducts operations which support international stability or domestic authorities.²⁹ The Army's purpose can be evenly divided into preparing for war and conducting peacetime operations.³⁰ Today there is less risk to U.S. national security than ever before even though there are several smaller threats to U.S. vital and important interests around the world. But with the force getting smaller, there are fewer options for designing a capable Army that can deploy and fight or operate with the proficiency required and expected by the world and the American people. As the Army gets smaller, it still has an implicit responsibility to ensure its "backup" is prepared. Yet with myriad missions ongoing, the Army does not even have the time to prepare itself adequately. A smaller threat and a purpose that recognizes peacetime and wartime roles for the military now allows the Army to really and safely integrate itself.

Personnel.

The Army at 1997 active force levels will not be able to keep 10 full-strength active divisions in the structure and simultaneously maintain readiness. While the Army is getting smaller, it is simultaneously getting busier. This has a destructive effect on personnel retention, morale, readiness, and families. This proposal would create more of the types of CS/CSS units that are typically employed in peacetime through decrements to the combat divisions. For example, the 10 AC divisions have approximately 180,000 soldiers. If one-third of the positions were filled by RC soldiers (through platoon roundout and AGR), it would then bring the force within TAA guidelines and simultaneously provide 37,000 additional spaces for additional Active CS and CSS units required for the conduct of peacetime operations. And with the primary focus of "Bold Shift" being to get the soonest-to-deploy RC units trained, the commitment in AC advisors could simultaneously be reduced thereby freeing up between 3,000 and 5,000 soldiers for return to active units.³¹

Budget.

Assuming the average strength of a division is 18,000 soldiers, if one-third of those positions were filled by RC soldiers, a significant savings could be accrued in the Military Personnel account. According to the Army Budget office, an active soldier costs the Army

\$40,000 per year while a reserve soldier only costs \$9,000. If one-third, or 6,000, of the soldiers in each division were to come from the Reserve Component, and assuming those active soldiers were taken out of the structure, the savings generated to the Army would be \$1.86 billion per year.³² With approval from Congress, these savings could be used for modernization.

Similar savings could be found in Operations and Maintenance and Procurement funds. While it would not be prudent to flatly reduce OMA accounts in division by one-third, OMA could be reduced somewhat to allow for the lesser OPTEMPO of the RC platoons. While there would still be Operations and Maintenance costs in other reserve units external to the AC divisions, this would effectively streamline OMA processes for “first-to-fight” units because all costs would be borne by the AC unit.

Supply.

As the Army draws down, as its budget gets smaller, and as the Army continues to work harder, it will be increasingly difficult to simultaneously ensure all components get modern and compatible equipment. This trend could become devastating on future battle fields if active commanders cannot talk to each other on the battlefield. Platoon roundout solves this somewhat by putting RC platoon equipment on the AC company commander’s hand receipt. The commander is responsible for ensuring the equipment is available, serviceable, compatible, and deployable. He sub-hand receipts the equipment to the reserve platoon leader and ensures it is cared for appropriately so that, if the unit is employed, the equipment is ready. Modernization for the Army becomes somewhat easier too. The focus is on immediately deploying units—the active divisions and its support forces. Materiel would be sent primarily to division property book officers for distribution to units in the division, regardless of component.

Maintenance.

A concern the Army has about reserve units is their apparent inability to maintain their equipment. They lack an understanding of the fundamentals of maintenance management, PMCS, and operator maintenance. The National Guard in particular has bypassed operator maintenance by utilizing contractor maintenance sites which likely will not deploy with the unit.³³ And they have little time to devote to maintenance during weekend drills. On the other hand, with vehicles

on the AC commander's hand receipt, he has a vested interest to ensure both the vehicles' readiness for combat and the reserve soldiers' proficiency in operator maintenance.

Training.

Of course, mission accomplishment is the biggest issue in this proposal. Can RC platoons be trained to acceptable standards in 39 days a year? Will AC companies with a roundout platoon be at greater risk? Training is pivotal. And it is actually the best reason for rounding out. Reserve units only have 39 days per year to become proficient in their skill. And the Army has a vested interest in ensuring that these units are trained as well as they can be. But with less time and personnel to devote to overseeing RC training, the Army must restructure to simultaneously train and operate: to train as they will fight.

If platoons are the highest echelon of training proficiency that can be achieved in 39 days, then the Army should focus on organizing, equipping, and **training** at that level. Studies have been published which analyzed a variety of training approaches and roundout programs as well as the optimum echelon to train in the time available to reserves. The Center for Army Training has shown analytically that the optimum size unit to train in 39 days is the platoon.³⁴ And Bold Shift has evolved over the past five years to focus on the platoon as the highest pre-mobilization echelon to train. This program recognizes the fact that there is not enough time to train at levels higher than platoon.

Under this proposal, with training planned and conducted by the AC company commander, the RC platoon would be in an ideal position to gain the most from the limited amount of training time available to them. Of course, AC units would have to modify their work schedules somewhat to accommodate the RC platoon. For instance, each weekend in which the reservists were training, the whole company would likewise be training. And during annual training, the company or higher echelon (battalion, brigade, or even division) could conduct a major FTX.

The focus would be on individual, crew, squad, and platoon training. The planning for this training would fall on the reserve platoon leader and the active company commander. And active Battalion Commanders would provide FM 25-100 oversight. Time would be more effectively managed since the focus would be on training and not administrative distracters. The

result would be improved readiness and experience in a core of reservists which over time would spread to other parts of the Reserve Components.

With the exception of some post-mobilization preparations, the platoon would be as ready to deploy as its active counterparts. A 1992 Rand report to the Secretary of Defense assesses that it would take 51 days for a roundout brigade to get to platoon level of proficiency after mobilization.³⁵ But with training now the responsibility of the AC company commander, the platoon could be as ready in those individual and collective tasks required for deployment as the active platoons. Additionally, this AC/RC proposal synergy would result through training and working together. The ultimate result of this efficient combination of limited forces will be a combat/force multiplier.

Faith and Confidence.

Perhaps the most unfortunate outcome of Desert Storm was the fact that roundout units who had been assured they would deploy were not. The distrust, suspicion, and hostility that has moved from that one fateful August 1990 decision has had repercussions throughout the Reserve and the Active Components. There is widespread distrust that the Active Component will do what they say. And there is equally hostile feelings by AC soldiers and leaders who must dedicate their limited time to either training the reserves or cleaning up after them. But despite this, many mid-level active commanders have indicated that, if they could supervise smaller units on a continuing basis they could improve their pre-mobilization skills and would ultimately have more confidence in their ability on the battlefield when needed.³⁶

Likewise, Reserve units are now faced with a growing retention problem because individual soldiers do not feel a sense of accomplishment in their training. Meaningful training and operations can reverse that trend. But this is not something that will happen simply by using AC advisors to oversee training. The training will have to be structured along AC lines and focused on milestones such as NTC or JRTC to be meaningful. And reservists must believe that they are a trusted and valuable member of the team. As platoons are assigned to active companies, as cohesion develops between these active and reserve cohorts, and slowly as these reservists are further integrated into other reserve units over time, the Total Army will benefit in a way not seen before. The overall readiness of all units—active and reserve—will improve.

Today, most active soldiers and junior leaders know little about the reserves. What they do know is usually couched in derogatory hearsay. Rounding out active companies with reserve platoons would provide the basis for a beneficial association at a much lower level. Junior officers would have a much better understanding of the vital role our reserve components play in national defense. And active small units would have a sense of kinship with their reserve counterparts. In a smaller Army, this will be absolutely essential.

Public Support.

Creighton Abrams saw the importance of public support to the dedication and commitment the Army had for its mission. Army leaders since the 1970s have also seen this truth born out time and time again. When the public supports the operation, the soldier believes in the cause. The Reserve Components represent the national will—its resolve—to accomplish any task in peacetime or war. Desert Storm represented a masterful play by the Army to get as much of the public involved in the war in the gulf as it could. Virtually every American citizen either had a relative or friend deployed to the gulf, or they knew someone who did. This resulted ultimately in overwhelming support for the operation.

But even though the Army is now more dependent on the Reserve Components than ever before, Abrams' vision of integrating the Total Army still has not been realized. For all our efforts to move certain functions into the reserves and for all our rhetoric about needing the reserves, as long as we continue to only selectively apply this to certain types of units, it illustrates to the public that we don't trust the reserves. This further detracts from the public support we hope to obtain. Failure to deploy the roundout brigades after they had been assured they would be simply feeds the mistrust the public has for its military. Gaining and maintaining public support may represent the single biggest reason for rounding out combat units at the platoon level.

Just as important, this proposal would propel the issue of reserve participation into all courses of action considering the use of military forces because reserves are so imbedded into the structure. The fact that the President has the power to deploy units into conflict or hazardous situations without first getting public support has led America's Army into crisis in the past. Under this proposal, reserve call-up would now be one of the first factors considered in all deployments of forces into major conflicts or peace operations. It is very likely that the Congress

would provide unanimous support for this approach to reshaping the force. They believe that an enormous amount of money goes to preparing a force that never will be used. This proposal places that force at the forefront of employment.

Concerns and Considerations

For all their vows to reform, somehow managers keep coming up with ways to stifle new ideas.³⁷

Any time major change occurs in a large organization, those affected will feel threatened. This proposal will in all likelihood be regarded as a threat by many, from both components. Some of the reasons this proposal will seem threatening are examined in more detail below.

Concerns.

- **Lack of trust.** Guardsmen in particular do not believe that, whatever integrative changes are made, the AC will deploy with RC combat forces when the time comes. This is an issue that can only be resolved over time.

- **Reduction in command opportunities.** Although this proposal does remove several command positions (from company to brigade) by placing RC platoons in active companies, it does not remove all command positions from the RC. There will still be a requirement for an RC strategic reserve, albeit possibly smaller since there are no likely near-term large threats on the horizon. And there will still be a requirement to provide a militia force to the states capable of conducting governor-directed missions. This proposal looks simply at a method of integrating the active forces in such a way that both components benefit over time. And in the long-term this proposal will improve leadership capabilities and professionalism of all RC personnel—a recurring weakness found by GAO, the DAIG, and other special studies.

- **Vandalism to RC Vehicles.** There is a concern that RC vehicles left unattended in AC motor pools would be subject to vandalism. This is a command issue. But it is important that the equipment be under the control of the Active commander to ensure accountability, serviceability, and compatibility.

- **Loss of armories.** Some guardsmen voiced concern over the potential reduction in armories created by this proposal. They believe that armories serve more than the unit—that it

was in many cases a community center and that taking away armories from the community would disrupt the social life of America's small towns.

•**Reduction in capability.** AC concerns will likely stem from the idea of smaller unit capability immediately available. This proposal effectively draws combat units down by one-third and also affects other CS and CSS units by some percentage based on their mission and support requirements. It also places a significant responsibility on active leadership from captain to general to ensure that RC units under their command are ready, either for peacetime operations or war. However, while this proposal does reduce capability somewhat, recent Army initiatives eliminate that capability entirely by approximately the same amount. This simultaneously provides a structural alternative to cutting the size of a proven combat force—the division--and reduces the OPTEMPO somewhat of active units who presently have a training association with an RC unit.

Considerations.

Three major things should be considered in conjunction with this proposal. First, in order to build a more cohesive RC platoon, one that feels like it is part of the team, the Army should look at its regimental system and build regiments that span the lines between the AC and RC. For example, the 41st Infantry Regiment should have two battalions in the active structure and one in the reserve structure. Soldiers, both AC and RC, could rotate between the three battalions. But more particularly, RC soldiers would have a place to progress their career. Second, the Army must decide, if it is serious about future readiness, just how deeply to implement a proposal such as this. While this proposal is focused on division structure, it certainly has application, and associated benefits, in all Army units. There are currently non-divisional units in the structure that are deployed or employed over 50% of the time. Some of those units are maintained at 80% of their wartime requirements. Finally, the Army needs to decide what to do with the savings in personnel. Should the structure be reduced (ahead of certain Congressional intervention that will do it for us)? Or should the savings be used to create additional units in the CS and CSS arena of the types that are traditionally constantly employed in the world (MPs, engineers, signal, aviation, etc.)?

Conclusion

The [Active] Army is simply the peace nucleus of the Great War Army... its strength and organization should always be considered with reference to its relation to the Greater War Army, which cannot be placed in the field until war is imminent. The problem is one of expansion... Its solution involves the provision of a sufficient peace nucleus, *the partial organization and training of citizen soldiers in peace, and provisions for prompt and orderly expansion on the outbreak of hostilities.*³⁸

Perhaps General Emory Upton was partly right. The Army needs to look inward for solutions. Upton, while he was suspicious of the reserves, believed the Army could not afford a large active component structure during peacetime. He, like General Abrams, also believed the Active Army had to ensure the reserves were prepared for future wars. The Army has a statutory responsibility to protect the United States. It can no longer accomplish this mission using active forces exclusively. And it does not have the time, either before or after mobilization, to train reserves to acceptable standards, nor is it using the few active soldiers it has efficiently. The Army must examine its structural paradigm, make hard choices about the force mix in the Army, get away from salami slice approaches or economies of scale, and redefine its shape for the 21st Century. Rounding out at platoon level is an acceptable alternative within acceptable risks. It indelibly links the active and reserve components. And it may be the only way the Army can keep a strong, robust structure and avoid the hollowness it experienced after the last drawdown.

This proposal provides the best alternative to the future structural crisis the Army faces. It salvages the Army's concept of preparing for two MRCs; it identifies some spaces for creation of additional units that are historically the busiest in the Army. And yes, it does provide some budgetary savings which should be focused on the Army's future. But the most valuable benefit of this proposal is that it recognizes the simple fact that as the Army gets smaller, it must rely on entire force—active, guard, and reserves. And the best way to ensure all the force is totally prepared is to integrate components in such a way that integrated training becomes the norm. According to Field Manual 100-11, "over half of the Army's total deployable forces are in the ARNG and Army Reserve. The management of these forces is of paramount importance to the total force."³⁹ True integration will ultimately engender trust between and among the components and simultaneously improve readiness as it becomes apparent that the Total Army is a seamless organization working towards a common end—the defense of this nation.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Bush, George. "State of the Union Message." Washington, DC. 28 January 1992.
- ² Association of the United States Army, Profile of the Army: A Reference Handbook (Arlington, VA: Institute of Land Warfare, 1994), p. 9.
- ³ The Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Military Strategy of the United States of America, 1995, (Washington, DC: 1995), pp. ii & 17.
- ⁴ Association of the United States Army, Army Budget Fiscal Year 1996: An Analysis, (Arlington, VA: Institute of Land Warfare, 1995), pp. 36 & 61.
- ⁵ Frank Oliveri, "Army's AGS Program to be Axed," Army Times, 26 February 1996, p. 2.
- ⁶ William Matthews, "Defense Spending Plan Still Up in the Air," Army Times, 19 February 1996, p. 12.
- ⁷ Colonels Dave Shaver and Dave Houghey, Is Roundout a Myth? A Case Study of the 48th Infantry Brigade, (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, circa 1990), p. 4.
- ⁸ National Defense Act of 1916; Rand Corporation, Assessing the Structure and Mix of Future Active and Reserve Forces: Final Report to the Secretary of Defense, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1992), p. 21-22.
- ⁹ Rand Corp., p. 25.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., p. 27. Of the 10 National Guard divisions called to active duty in 1950 and 1951, none were prepared to fight and consequently were not deployed to Korea.
- ¹¹ Ibid., p. 31.
- ¹² Ibid., p. 32-33. also see Congressional Record, September 9, 1970, p. 30928.
- ¹³ Lewis Sorley, "Gen Creighton Abrams Orchestrated 1970 Cambodia Incursion," National Guard Magazine (July 1972), p. 23.
- ¹⁴ General Creighton W. Abrams, "Readiness: To Fight a War, To Keep a Peace," Army Magazine (October 1973), p. 20.
- ¹⁵ Sorley, Gen Creighton Abrams Orchestrated 1970 Cambodia Incursion, p. 23.
- ¹⁶ Abrams, Readiness: To Fight a War, To Keep a Peace, p. 20.
- ¹⁷ One of the selling points to this "new" concept was the fact that, if one-third of a division could be converted to the reserves, the Army could afford to activate three more divisions for a total of 16--which was the number the leadership believed they needed to guard against the threat.
- ¹⁸ Shaver and Houghey, Is Roundout a Myth? A Case Study of the 48th Infantry Brigade, p. 1; Stephen L. Goff and Ralph E Kahlan, The Roundout Program: Is it Still Valid?, (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1990), p. 8.
- ¹⁹ Shaver, p. 7.
- ²⁰ Rand Corp., p. 30. The first time reserves were called for this reason was during the Berlin crisis. But all of the senior leaders had indelibly marked in their minds the memories of their return from Vietnam and the terrible way they had been treated after a war where they did not have public support. Senior Army leaders were determined to not let that happen again.
- ²¹ Conversations with staff officers inside the Pentagon revealed that the Services all use the Reserve Components differently. When the first list of Army RC requirements was submitted to Mr. Cheney, he was struck by the significant difference in quantities between the Services and did not believe he could defend the Army's requirement to the President.
- ²² Richard Cheney, Letter to the House Armed Services Committee, 6 Sep 90; Departments of the Army and the Air Force, After Action Report: Operation Desert Shield/Operation Desert Storm, 2 August 1990-28 February 1991, (Washington, DC: National Guard Bureau, 1991), p. 6.
- ²³ Departments of the Army and the Air Force, p. 7. According to the National Guard, the 48th Infantry Brigade was held to a higher standard than active units which deployed; they believe that many active units did not meet Army Mobilization and Operations Planning System deployment criteria before they were deployed, but the standards were downgraded selectively for them. This claim was not substantiated by the DAIG, GAO, and various Observer-Controllers at the National Training Center. See Rand Corp., p. 55.
- ²⁴ This paper does not consider the artillery brigades of the Army Reserve, who performed extremely well, as a maneuver brigade.

²⁵ Center for Army Training briefing given to the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations in March 1991.

²⁶ Merriam-Webster Inc., The New Merriam-Webster Dictionary, (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster Inc., 1989), p. 388; To integrate, according to the dictionary, is "to form, coordinate, or blend into a functioning or unified whole; to incorporate into a larger unit; to end the segregation of and bring into common and equal membership in society or an organization.

²⁷ Goff and Ralph E. Kahlan. The Roundout Program: Is it Still Valid?, , p. 30.

²⁸ A quick review of the busiest units in the Army would easily show that peacetime operations require predominantly combat heavy engineers, Military Police, Civil Affairs, aviators, transportation, and perhaps medical personnel (although those medical missions can be accomplished from within the less expensive reserves). As an example, the 536th Engineer Battalion, now being taken out of the structure due to Panama Canal Treaty Implementation and general Army force structure trends was deployed 17 out of 24 months from May 1993 to May 1995. The 536th is an ALO 3 unit.

²⁹ Department of the Army, The Army, Field Manual 100-1, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, 1994), p. 2; Department of the Army, Army Budget Office. The Army Budget: 1996/1997 President's Budget, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, 1995), p. 13.

³⁰ Rand Corp., p. 87.

³¹ Because the soonest-to-deploy units are now being trained by their AC Company Commander.

³² Army Budget Office. \$1.86 billion=60,000 soldiers by \$31,000 in saving

³³ This was brought home dramatically at the National Training Center in 1991 when the 48th Infantry Brigade had to stand down for two days due to inoperable equipment. Maintenance deficiencies in the RC is widely known and can be corroborated by RC advisors and CTC observer/controllers who have seen the lack of maintenance in the units and the associated results in unit performance.

³⁴ Center for Army Training briefing given to the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations in March 1991.

³⁵ Rand Corp., p. 122.

³⁶ Rand Corp., p. 133.

³⁷ James M. Higgins, 101 Creative Problem Solving Ideas: The Handbook of New Ideas for Business, (Winter Park, FL: The New Management Publishing Company, 1994), p. 199.

³⁸ Report of the Secretary of War, Annual Reports, 19112, p. 69.

³⁹ Department of the Army, Force Integration, Field Manual 100-11 (Washington: U.S. Department of the Army, January 1995), p. 3-9.

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